

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT LEAD AND COPPER SAMPLING

Q: What will the containers look like?

A: They are one liter screw cap plastic containers. There will be instructions.

Q: If a customer has high lead levels, will he/she have to replace the plumbing?

A: No, this misconception about the rule seems to be a major reason why customers will not allow samples to be taken in their homes.

Q: Do all samples need to be taken in one day?

A: No, samples have 14 days after collection to be preserved (acidified) by the laboratory. Samples should be collected as soon as possible after receipt of the sampling kits. Once the first samples are collected, any remaining samples need to be collected within a week to allow sufficient time for shipment to the laboratory. After acidification the samples have a shelf life of 6 months.

Q: Do I need to send in all the samples at the same time?

A: Yes, the laboratory prefers they are all sent at the same time.

Q: Is it important how long the water sits in the pipes and fixtures before I sample?

A: Yes, it's very important. The rule says it must sit for at least 6 hours. Try to collect the samples as soon as possible after the 6-hour time period is up. Excessive lengths of sitting time may cause changes in lead levels that may not reflect your water's true quality.

Q: Is there anything else I need to know before taking my samples?

A: Yes, brass alloys in faucets may legally contain up to 0.25% lead. You should probably avoid brand new fixtures. They may give off excessive amounts of lead for a short time after installation. Results might not reflect the true quality of your water.

Q: Anything else?

A: Yes, homes that have very low water use overall or at the sampling tap are poor sample locations. Pick sites with families that use lots of water.

Q: Are there any other tips for avoiding high lead levels that are not representative of the system?

A: Yes, make certain all sample containers are filled completely. Partly filled containers will not reflect true values when analyzed; the sample results will probably be higher.

Q: How often do I need to sample?

A: Twice during the first year—once for each 6-month period. If action levels are not exceeded during either of these periods, monitoring will be reduced to a yearly schedule.

If you have any additional questions please contact:

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